

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a novel bath sponge and method of manufacture. The method includes manipulating each of a plurality of discrete lengths of flexible mesh-netting tube into a discrete substantially doughnut shaped band, each band bounding a central opening. The manipulation can including folding and/or rolling the each tube into the desired configuration.

Each band is then stretched on a support structure so that the central opening of each band is at least partially aligned. The support structure can comprises a pair of spaced apart posts over which each of the bands are stretched. Each of the bands are then secured together at a first location and at a spaced apart second location. Finally, the bands are released from the support structure so that the bands rebound into a substantially spherical bath sponge bounding a central pocket. If desired, an object such as soap, a toy, or a stuffed animal can be placed within the central pocket. A portion of the object, such as the head of a stuffed animal, can project between the bands and out of the sponge.

[006] The resulting sponge has a number of advantages and benefits, some of which will be hereinafter described. For example, the sponge of the present invention is tied at opposing ends resulting in a configuration that retains its shape longer and resists unraveling to a greater degree. In addition, the sponge of the present invention is formed into a generally spherical configuration that maintains its shape and has a substantially smooth exterior surface. This results in a unique look and feel. Moreover, by alternating the bands with different colors, styles, and material properties, a wide

variety of different sponges can be created. The method of the present invention is simple, quick, and easy to perform, making it amenable to use in mass production.

[007] These and other objects and features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[008] To further clarify the above and other advantages and features of the present invention, a more particular description of the invention will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof, which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is appreciated that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[009] Figure 1 is a perspective view of an elongated tube made of flexible mesh material used in practicing the method of the present invention;

[010] Figure 2 is an elevated cross-sectional side view of the tube in Figure 1 after having been folded down upon itself;

[011] Figure 3 is an elevated cross-sectional side view of the tube in Figure 2 further folded up upon itself;

[012] Figure 4 is an elevated side view in partial cross section of a support structure having a band formed from the tube in Figure 3 stretched thereon;

[013] Figure 5 is an elevated side view in partial cross section of the support structure of Figure 4 with a plurality of bands stretched thereon;

[014] Figure 6 is a top plan view of the assembly shown in Figure 5 showing the opposing central portions of the bands being secured together; and

[015] Figure 7 is an elevated side view of a finished bath sponge of the present invention.